

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 1317

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, XF (PRICE MELVIN)

SUBJECT: PRICE VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

REF: TEL AVIV 966

SUMMARY: SAUDIS PLEASED BY CODEL VISIT AND HOPE OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WILL COME IN THE FUTURE. WHILE OFFERING ALL APPROPRIATE HOSPITALITY, SENIOR OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE KING, TOOK HARD LINE ON RIGHT OF PALESTINIANS TO RETURN TO THEIR LAND, BUT MADE CLEAR THAT ARABS DID NOT WISH TO PUSH ISRAELIS INTO THE SEA, AND WOULD SETTLE FOR WITHDRAWAL TO 1967 BORDERS. CONGRESSMEN WERE REPEATEDLY URGED TO WEIGH BENEFITS RECEIVED FROM U.S. SUPPORT TO ISRAEL AND BENEFITS WHICH WOULD ACCRUE FROM GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS. END SUMMARY

1. SAG GENERALLY FEELS THAT ANYONE WHO COMES TO SAUDI ARABIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST WITH AN OPEN MIND WILL LEAVE WITH INCREASED CONVICTION THAT (A) ARAB POSITON IN ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE IS RESONABLE AND JUST; (B) THAT SAG FULLY SUPPORTS EFFORTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO REGAIN THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS AND IS NOT LIKELY TO WAVER IN THIS REGARD; AND (C) THAT IF A PERMANENT PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED IN THE AREA, THEN BOTH U.S. GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE AMERICAN BUSINESS WILL REAP RICH REWARDS IN ASSISTING DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH SAUDI ARABIA IN PARTICULAR AND ARAB WORLD AS A WHOE.

2. THUS, SAG OFFICIALS WERE PLEASED WITH FEBRUARY 12-14

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VISIT OF CODEL PRICE TO SAUDI ARABIA AND HOPE FOR VISITS BY

OTHER CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS IN THE FUTURE. WHILE OFFERING ALL APPROPRIATE HOSPITALITY, SAUDIS DID ASSUME FIRM--SOME CONGRESSMEN FELT EXTREME--POSITIONS IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTIONS BY CODEL. NOTEWORTHY WERE THE RESPONSES OF PRINCE FAHAD AND KING FAISAL WHEN ASKED BY THE CODEL WHETHER "THEIR LAND" TO WHICH THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN MEANT AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK OR THE ACTUAL LAND PREVIOUSLY OWNED BY PALESTINIANS DISPERSED FROM PALESTINE. BOTH FAHAD AND THE KING, ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS, TOOK THE POSITION THAT PALESTINIANS MUST BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES PREVIOUSLY OWNED, AND THAT IDEALLY JEWS AND ARABS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LIVE TOGETHER AND JOINTLY GOVERN THEMSELVES IN A PALESTINIAN STATE

3. ON A MORE CONCILIATORY NOTE, DEPMINDEF TURKI EMPHASIZED THAT THE ARABS HAD NO DESIRE TO PUSH ISRAEL INTO THE SEA, BUT MERELY WANTED THE PALESTINIANS TO HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE. BOTH FAHAD AND THE KING, IN OTHER PORTIONS OF THEIR REMARKS, STATED THAT PEACE COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THE AREA IF THE ISRAELIS WOULD WITHDRAW TO THE 1967 BORDERS AND RESTORE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS TO THE PALESTINIANS. WHILE AVOIDING A DIRECT REPLY TO INQUIRIES CONCERNING THE RECOGNITION OF ISRAELI SOVEREIGNTY IN THE MIDDLE EAST, BOTH FAHAD AND THE KING INDICATED THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RELEVANT U.N. RESOLUTIONS WOULD SATISFY THE ARABS.

4. PRINCE TURKI INQUIRED ABOUT PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO WITHDRAW AMERICAN MILITARY ADVISORY GROUPS FROM ALL FOREIGN COUNTRIES, STATING THAT SAG COULD NOT BUY MILITARY EQUIPMENT IF IT CANNOT ALSO HAVE TRAINING ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE. IF THE LATTER WERE NOT AVAILABLE, SAUDI ARABIA WOULD HAVE TO OBTAIN ITS EQUIPMENT FROM SOURCES WHICH WOULD PROVIDE SUCH TRAINING. CONGRESSMAN PRICE RESPONDED TO THIS POINT BY STATING THAT HIS COMMITTEE WOULD STUDY VERY THOROUGHLY ANY SUGGESTED LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD WITHDRAW U.S. MILITARY ADVISORY ASSISTANCE FROM COUNTRIES FRIENDLY TO THE USG.

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5. CONGRESSMAN WAXMAN ASKED THE KING WHY ALL JEWS WERE PROHIBITED FROM ENTERING THE KINGDOM, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE KING, IN HIS OWN REMARKS, WAS CAREFUL TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN JEWS AND ZIONISTS. FAISAL REPLIED THAT ALL JEWS SUPPORT ISRAEL, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT ZIONISTS, AND THAT THE ARAB VIEW WAS THAT THOSE WHO SUPPORT ONE'S ENEMY ARE ALSO AN ENEMY. SINCE JEWS HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH SAUDI ARABIA TODAY, AND NO BUSINESS IN THE KINGDOM, THEY HAVE NO LEGITIMATE

REASON FOR VISITING THE KINGDOM, CONCLUDED THE KING.

6. ALL THREE OFFICIALS URGED THE CONGRESSMEN TO WEIGH THE BENEFITS THE U.S RECEIVES FROM ITS SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AGAINST THE BENEFITS WHICH ACCURE FROM BEING ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE ARAB WORLD. SOME INCIDENTAL SUPPORT WAS GIVEN TO THIS VIEW BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING HISHAM NAZER'S STATEMENT THAT THE COMING FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN WOULD CALL FOR EXPENDITURES OF 150 BILLION DOLLARS, THE BULK OF

WHICH WOULD GO FOR GOODS AND SERVICES PRODUCED BY THE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED WESTERN NATINS.

7. EMBASSY IS POUCHING A MORE COMPLETE MEMORANDUM OF MEETINGS WITH SAUDIS FOR THE RECORD TO NEA/ARP AND DOD/ISA.

8. PRESS COVERAGE ALERTED CODEL TO VINNELL SANG CONTRACT, RESULTING IN INTENSIVE QUESTIONING OF PROJECT DIRECTOR COL. THOMAS MORT. POINT WAS MADE THAT PRIVATE AMERICAN FIRMS HAVE BEEN TRAINING SAUDI MILITARY IN USE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR MANY YEARS AND THAT ONLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN VINNELL CONTRACT IS THAT VINNELL DOES NOT MANUFACTURE EQUIPMENT IN WHOSE USE IT WILL BE INSTRUCTING. CODEL WAS PRESENTED PARTIAL COPY OF VINNELL CONTRACT FOR CLOSER EXAMINATION.

9. EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE STRUCK BY NEGATIVE IMPRESSION APPARENTLY CARRIED AWAY BY A NUMBER OF CODEL MEMBERS AS A RESULT THEIR VISIT TO ISRAEL. ISRAELIS WERE PICTURED AS ALMOST DESPERATE IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO CURRY FAVOR WITH CODEL, DEMEANING THEMSELVES TO EXTENT, SAID ONE CODEL MEMBER, THAT CHIEF OF STAFF OF IDF ACTED AS TOUR GUIDE ON BUS. OTHERS MADE DISPARAGING REMARKS COMPARING ISRAELIS TO A MAN SEEKING A HANDOUT. THOSE MEMBERS OF CODEL WHO HAD VISITED ISRAEL
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IN NOVEMBER 1973, ALSO NOTED WHAT THEY CONSIDERED TO BE A MUCH LESS CONFIDENT ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF ISRAELIS DURING THIS VISIT.

10. PROBABLY MOST LASTING IMPRESSION LEFT ON CODEL BY VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA WAS EXTENT OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR AMERICAN INDUSTRY, A POINT MADE BOTH BY OBSERVING PRESENT LEVEL OF ACTIVITY AND BY DISCUSSIONS WITH HEADS OF AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN RIYADH AT RECEPTION GIVEN FOR CODEL.
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